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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6453
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4240
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2839
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7417
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1462
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/UAE, Syria/Lebanon, Syria/PLO, Syria/EU,
Syria/Austria (12/18)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on Dec. 18 reported President Asad's visit to the UAE on Dec. 17 and his meetings with UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Talks dealt with the deteriorating situation in the occupied territories. Both leaders stressed the necessity of preventing clashes among Palestinians and containing any incident that could cause cracks in the Palestinian national unity. Both sides also discussed the situation in Iraq and stressed the necessity of encouraging Iraqi and Arab efforts to establish national unity among all segments of the Iraqi society and make the political process there a success. Talks also dealt with the situation in Lebanon and support for everything the Lebanese agree upon.

Papers also reported VP Shara's meeting on Dec. 17 with a delegation of the Lebanese People's Party, headed by Najah Wakim, which focused on developments in Lebanon and bilateral relations. Wakim told reporters following his meeting with Shara that "the US and some other forces are halting the political dialogue in Lebanon and every effort for reaching a solution that satisfies all Lebanese.

VP Shara also met on Dec. 17 with Farouq al-Qadoumi, Chief of the Political Department of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Talks centered on the aggravating situation on the Palestinian arena and the means of easing the current tension. Al-Shara renewed Syria's call for all Palestinian groups to discard division, avoid any escalating steps, and return to dialogue to achieve national accord. He also asserted Syria's persistence support for all efforts to solve these problems.

On Syrian-Iraqi relations, papers reported Syrian Minister of Interior Gen. Bassam Abdul Majid's meeting with Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad Kazem al-Bolani. In a press statement to reporters, Abdul Majid said that Syria has undertaken many procedures to control the borders between the two countries by increasing border control points, and arresting hundreds of people who tried to enter Iraq from the Syrian territories. For his part, Iraqi Interior Minister al-Bolani described the talks "fruitful and constructive," adding that the meetings between different committees were marked by transparency and sincerity.

Papers also reported Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Hasan Turkamni's meeting on Dec. 17 with Ghounter Blater, Austrian Chief of Staff,

focusing on the latest developments in the region and mutual cooperation between the Syrian and Austrian armies. Dr. Blater inspected the Austrian battalion in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDPOF) in occupied Syrian Golan.

On Syrian-EU relations, papers reported that on Dec. 17 Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Naser Qaddour received a delegation of the Green Group in the European Parliament headed by its Vice-Chairman Pierre Jonckheer. Papers featured a statement by Qaddour affirming that "Syria has always been seeking to establish just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with the international legitimacy resolutions and the Madrid Conference to restore the occupied Arab territories till June 4th 1967 line." Qaddour added that "Syria is still calling for a clear and an independent European position regarding the current critical situation in the region."

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad holds meetings with UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed reiterating the importance of unifying the Palestinian ranks, supporting everything the Lebanese parties agree upon and achieving Iraqi national reconciliation. President Asad confers with the Syrian community and members of the Abu Dhabi Trade and Industry Chamber of Commerce. The President affirms the important role of expatriates in encouraging mutual investments" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/18)

"Vice-President Shara discusses with Farouk al-Qadoumi, Chief of Political Department of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Lebanese MP Najah Wakim the means to avoid escalation in Palestine and to enhance Lebanese national unity" (Government-owned

Al-Thawra, 12/18)

"Defense Minister Lt. Gen Turkamni discusses with Austrian Defense Minister Blater cooperation between the two armies" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/18)

"Syrian and Iraqi Interior Ministries hold talks. Interior Minister Abdul Majid: We achieved big steps on controlling the borders. Iraqi Interior Minister al-Bolani: Discussions were fruitful and constructive" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/18)

"Blair in Baghdad suddenly. Our forces will remain in Iraq!" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 12/18)

"Two Palestinians killed, 30 injured due to security chaos. Prime Minister Hanieh: Early elections are not constitutional and aggravate tension" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/18)

"The Lebanese opposition rejects provocations of the governing team and determines to escalate sit-in protests. The opposition supports the Arab initiative for a settlement" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/18)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"The Golan is Key to War and Peace"

Ahmad Sawwan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, commented (12/18): "A recent UNSC resolution called on Israel to revoke its decision to annex the occupied Syrian Golan Heights because it is null and void....

"The occupation of the Golan will not last and will come to an end sooner or later....

"Israel, more than anyone else, knows that as far as Syria and all the Arabs are concerned, the Golan is the key to war and peace in the region. All its attempts to keep the Golan, or even part of it, by deception and attempts to bargain during the peace negotiations

have failed because those attempts collided with a strong and solid Syrian national will. This will proved that there could be no peace in the region without the return of the entire Golan to the motherland, Syria, and without the return of all the occupied Arab territories within a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace....

"Talks on the Syrian negotiating track can only resume from where they left off because about 80 percent of the solution had already been achieved and negotiations cannot go on forever....

"Syrian calls for stronger pressure on Israel to comply with UN resolutions and achieve peace in the region.... The clear road to peace lies in an end to the occupation because it is the source of tension and the cause of the problems of the region, from Iraq to Lebanon to Palestine."

"An Oppressor and an Oppressed"

Maha Sultan, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (12/18): "The relationship between the United States and the United Nations was not a working relationship, as Condoleezza Rice claimed, but a relationship between an oppressor and an oppressed....

"UN Secretary General Kofi Annan started to criticize the United States only when he was about to quit the international organization. During his term, Annan refrained from criticizing the US, scoring points at our expense. He and his ilk should have quit silently so that the world would forget them and their cowardly positions that brought tragedies and disasters upon nations....

"During Kofi Annan's term, the United Nations came under much American pressure, especially with regard to the Middle East.... It issued the largest number of resolutions against the peoples of the region, and its record was full of all kinds of defeatism, cowardliness, blindness, and disregard for Washington's plans to redraw the map of the region based on the American-Israeli interests."

Roebuck